Vol. IX, No. 44 HUMAN EVENTS October 29, 1952

THE PASSIVE PROFESSIONAL MAJORITY

By E. MERRILL ROOT

IN THE 1920's Upton Sinclair wrote a now half-forgotten book, *The Goose-Step.* Its thesis was that capitalism dominated American colleges, that the Plutocracy was in the saddle and rode the academic mind, that education was ultra-conservative. The book was somewhat sentimental, often petulant, largely exaggerated; yet *at that time* its charge had a basic point that called for a corrective. College presidents and professors met the charge with a sense of outrage that became a most vocal outcry. Why? Largely, I think, because the charge, though exaggerated, touched a sensitive nerve and stirred a latent sense of guilt.

But what happens today when the same charges are even more violently made? When *The Nation* (June 28, 1952) revives and streamlines Sinclair's thesis, suggesting that American life (including the academic world) is under the shadow of fascism, what is the reaction of college presidents and professors? Gone is all the anger. Instead, the charge is accepted and even welcomed by colleges with a strange complacency.

But if, on the other hand, one ventures even to suggest, much less to state strongly, that a militant minority of Left-minded liberals and radicals is out-shouting and out-smarting the patriotic and Right-minded majority of college professors, who allow their beliefs to be drowned in the din, one is promptly declared a traitor to professors and an enemy of the colleges. Today, the outrage and the outcry that once met the charge of conservatism are now expended on the charge of radicalism. Again, why? Is it not now, as then, for the same reason — that the indictment touches a sensitive nerve and stirs a latent sense of guilt?

WHAT THEN, is the answer which we Right-minded professors should make when we are accused of standing too far to the Left? We should not deny — for we cannot do so truthfully — that there have been and are radical excesses in the colleges; but we should seek creatively and affirmatively to balance and supersede these by developing the good that lies in our own hearts, which (for reasons too detailed to discuss here) have lain fallow and passive. The radical minority today is *activist,* and therefore bulks huge; the conservative majority is *passivist,* and so develops no voice and influence to equal its numbers and its intelligence. Let professors not be angry with those who are in conflict with the Left, but let them themselves drown out that Left with their own bold affirmations.

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Take a concrete example of what I mean. An AP release (October 9, 1952) informs the country that a little cell of liberal Harvard professors has launched a campaign to raise funds and influence people toward the defeat of Senators McCarthy in Wisconsin and Jenner in Indiana. The professors have a perfect right to do this, and even to resort to the doubtful grace of labelling these two patriotic and intelligent Americans "the greatest menace the American liberal tradition has faced in our lifetime". But I and (I hope) many more Americans have an equally good right to say that these professors are definitely on the Left and that they offer evidence that professors and colleges often stand on the Left.

My main point, however, is something deeper and more important: I think that many American professors believe that Senator Jenner, at least, is one of the bulwarks preserving American traditions and freedom; yet, what have *we* done to help him in comparison with what the radical professors have done to hurt him? Why do not Right-minded professors organize a cell to write letters and raise funds? Why let Harvard professors destroy what we can create?

Again, at least 160 American professors publicly endorsed and sponsored the left-wing Waldorf-Astoria "Peace Conference". Whatever their caliber or motivation — whether they were sympathizers with, or only dupes of, the Great Reaction — all 160 of them were deliberately advertising to the American people that American colleges are Left-minded. I do not smear them with red when I say this — they smeared themselves by playing in the red paint. Why feel an outrage at the mere stating of the fact, or indulge in outcry over the mere listing of the professors' own free choice?

Most American colleges, most American professors, are too intelligent and too patriotic to dabble in this lunacy of the Left. But why are we not, ourselves, equal activists of the Right? We could have deluged the papers with letters explaining the idiocy of such crying of peace when there is no peace, such camouflage of the vulture as the dove. We could have explained to our students the trickery of such "peace offensives". We could have publicly dissociated ourselves from the bad taste and wretched logic of our colleagues, and drawn up statements to rebuke them. There were 160 signatures to the Waldorf-Astoria "Peace Conference"; why were there not 16,000 against it?

WHAT GETS colleges into public disfavor today — often far beyond their real desserts? First, during the honeymoon of the New Deal with the Communist Party, a hard, ruthless, militant, sophisticated core of party-liners established itself secretly here and there in positions of power. They were not many, they are not many; but they are clever,

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powerful, and set in key positions. They are most concerned with *not being known* as Communists, or even fellow-travellers; they are quite content if they can slant history, literature, political science, or any subject, so as to pour acid on American traditions, American life, American morale.

Sometimes an open servant of the party-line will be visible: *The Saturday Evening Post* (in an editorial, September 7, 1952) wrote: "Dr. Clarence F. Hiskey, who was accused under oath of atomic espionage — and has himself refused to answer essential questions on the ground of self-incrimination — has been rehired by Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute". But, if possible, they are not known and do not wish to be known.

Secondly, I regretfully believe that many of the too complacent professors of the Right, while innocent of any subversive words or deeds, help the cause of subversion simply by being too complacent and minimizing the danger. They will not see what is written in letters a foot high. So they become sincere anti-anti-Communists, and seem to defend what actually they should hate. They are like the lady who wrote me that in the 1900's she "played at being a Socialist" while in college, and now she votes Republican, so why worry? But what good has her voting Republican done her, when the increasing vogue of "playing liberal" has opened the dykes to the deluge of the last two decades?

So a charming academic lady told me: "Whittaker Chambers wants to see Communists under every bed." Of course Chambers says, rather, that certain Communists are *in* certain beds where they have no right to be. But too few will believe that. They talk as the Trojans must have talked to Cassandra, the very night before Troy fell in blood and fire.

A college professor does me the honor courteously and intelligently to criticize my view. He tells me that I see everything in terms of black and white, and the issues are not black and white but all shades of gray. Of course I know the subtle complexities of things; yet my experience has shown me that only as I see contrasting colors — in a charcoal of Blake, an oil of Rembrandt, a sunset over Indiana hills, or the conflict of collectivism and individualism — do I see truth. We see the world as "all shades of gray" only when fog covers all the world.

We cannot afford to see the world in fog today. Too many casualties in Korea, too many millions in Siberian slave camps, too ominous an advance of state-controlled austerity regimes as in England, too many collectivists in high places, make it too perilous. A G.I. dying on Korean hills is not dying for a shade of gray; Hermann Flade, facing the death sentence of the East German People's Court with the words "Freedom means more than life to me", is not dying for a shade of gray. The world *is* divided into black and white, so far as will and moral choice are concerned.

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Also my good critic says he himself knows all party-liners on the campus (because they have tried to influence him personally), and they are only three out of 3,000; thus demonstrating a naiveté about the ways party-liners function. He goes on to say — a favorite *reductio ad absurdam* of the charge that the academic tone is leftish — that the majority of professors in his university vote Republican. That is the dreadful fact: they *vote* Republican, but their enemies *act* collectivist. We must cease to salve our consciences by voting Republican, and begin to change things by living individualist.

THIS USUAL American optimism, this allergy to the tragic sense of life, is our most dangerous weakness. It leads to complacency, tolerance of the intolerable, and Communist-aiding anti-anti-Communism, so academically fashionable today.

Simply ponder, in rebuttal, the cool statement of the cautious Arthur Krock (*New York Times*, July 14, 1949), who says that for the last 16 years "the growing testimony of the press, the letters to the editor column, the radio, book reviews, and other media for carrying persuasion to the people . . . is currently from the left". We professors of the Right may urge that we have done nothing to help this on; but what have we done to hold it back?

One fault we transcend is the tendency to ignore the concrete and to glorify the abstract. The modern abstract intellectual loves terms like "liquidate" — it sounds as harmless as pouring champagne on a telephone directory. Let us see it as it is — the blowing of a political opponent's brains out by a pistol behind the ears.

When Shakespeare shows us the vicious Cornwall trampling out Gloucester's eyes, he does not reduce it to a statistic ("Gloucester, so far, has lost only one eye . . ."), or to abstraction ("Gloucester, after all, has merely had his eyes liquidated . . .") — he has Cornwall say, "Out, vile jelly."

Let us learn this reality. Let us not comfort ourselves with the statistics that there are only "a few thousand card-carrying Communists", or the fallacious abstract comparison between the "communism" tried by the primitive Christians or to the experimental Americans and the Soviet version, "so why point with alarm?" Let us *see* the G. I. on Korean hills, Cardinal Mindzenty as photographed before his trial and after his trial, the low wages and high taxes of socialist England.

Above all, let us professors of the Right transcend our Hamlet-hesitance. We have played Hamlet long enough. "To be or not to be" is no longer a possible question.

E. Merrill Root is Professor of English at Earlham College, Richmond, Ind., and the author of several books of poetry. His "Darkness at Noon in American Colleges" — HUMAN EVENTS, July 30 — attracted wide attention; over 25,000 copies were bought and distributed by individuals and the article was reprinted in a number of publications.

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HUMAN EVENTS

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Volume IX, No. 44 Wednesday, October 29, 1952 Washington, D. C.

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Our Vote: We take this last opportunity to indicate our preference for the candidacy of General Eisenhower over that of Governor Stevenson. We do so — and in no attempt to be paradoxical — in the hope that his election may mean the beginning of the end of the Republican Party — and the rise of a new conservative party.

Constantly, we hear Republicans say desperately: "Ike's defeat would spell the end of the Republican Party." The remark is absurd. If the Republican Party has sufficient vitality, there is no reason for such apprehension. If it hasn't, its leaders should take effective steps to merge it with the conservative wing of the Democratic Party, forming a new party. The result of such a junction would be the creation of a conservative party capable of winning general elections and carrying out a conservative program.

Why would an Ike victory make the latter prospect more likely? The General has taken a States Rights stand on two issues, on FEPC and tidelands oil — thereby establishing common ground with the Southern conservatives. Without a States Rights foundation no conservative party can survive in this country today. Stevenson — be it noted — takes directly opposite stands on both these matters. The philosophic base for the Eisenhower position would probably become wider and stronger because of his victory.

Akin and related to these two stands is the General's unqualified commitment to Senator Taft that he would reduce federal expenses the first year and effect a $10 billion cut in taxes the second. Such a slice off the bloated corpus of Big Government would be a constructive step towards returning power to the states.

Today, realignment of the major parties is the "wave of the future". Samuel Lubell in his best-selling book, *The Future of American Politics*, hails this development as inevitable. Lubell is a Northerner. But we also find the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, one of the most important organs in the South, designating realignment as a political imperative. If Ike wins, his victory would depend on attracting so many voters hitherto outside the Republican Party that he would find it difficult to disregard their attitudes later. Hence, the knell of the GOP as it has long existed has struck and big political changes loom.

We concede that this apologia for Ike rests on speculative grounds. There is no assurance that the conservative Republicans will guide Ike's course if he is elected. We do not know what secret commitments he has made to such people as Dewey and Sherman Adams. Those who put over his nomination may prevail as the Palace Guard. There is a danger that Ike from the White House might damage the conservative coalition in Congress by putting pressure on Republican members to support New Dealish measures. During the campaign, the General has shown himself contradictory and appallingly fuzzy on many issues. A vote for Ike is a gamble. Nevertheless, the alternative is Stevenson — with all the sinister possibilities inherent in his election.

The election of Stevenson does not, but the election of Eisenhower could offer an opportunity for conservative Republicans to pluck victory out of a confused election aftermath. With boldness and courage they can take advantage of the inevitable uncertainty and fluidity (attendant on a change of regimes) to build a conservative foundation for the future. If the conservative GOP members of Congress should grasp the nettle, offering a generous congressional merger to the Southern conservatives, Ike could not afford to play ball with GOP "liberals"; he would then have to depend on an overwhelming joint

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conservative majority in Congress. Then, and only then, would a victory for Ike — and a vote for Ike — receive its justification.

McCarthy Speech: Twelve hours later a Democratic Party publicity man was admitting to us, *sotto voce,* that Joe's TV talk would have an adverse effect on Stevenson's chances.

And twelve days (more or less) beforehand, the Democratic stooges in press, radio and pulpit were spreading rumors that the address would be scandalous. All this was designed to spread confusion and to take "the bloom off the peach" before it bloomed — an old dodge. It failed.

We learn on competent authority that the Stevenson GHQ sent an emissary to the dinner sponsoring committee and tried to get an advance copy of the speech, to delete "scandalous material". They didn't get a copy — at least not until the press got their advance releases a few hours before the show. Some of the press tried to make much of the late release hour, with a hint of network censorship. Actually, Joe was late in finishing the text (he always is, like some other writers we know).

Another misconception — due to partial treatment by some newspapers. The broadcast was no rich man's affair, although they rounded up a mass of people at $50 a plate. The committee tells us that, had they enjoyed sufficient time to do so, they could easily have raised the necessary funds (approximately $70,000) from little people. As it was, they received $30,000 from some 6,000 individuals averaging $5.00 a piece. The audience — that's the main thing — was a people's affair.

A friend just remarked that the front page of the *New York Times* the morning after carried an editorial against McCarthy. How was that? Two stories, each factually correct, were closely aligned on that page: (1) One a news account of what the Senator said; and (2) the story that the Post Office was billing McCarthy for $289 because he allegedly abused the franking privilege. It would be difficult to convince any person in this politically sophisticated town that the franking yarn wasn't held up and timed to be broken on the day of Joe's broadcast. That's why our friend says the *Times,* by cooperating in this sort of Government game, editorialized on the front page against McCarthy.

In conclusion two observations on the McCarthy broadcast:

(1) The Senator's documentation was not only formidable, it was accurate. We know, because he used, with fidelity to facts, two stories which HUMAN EVENTS was the first to break. (The one on Admiral Staton and Adlai, and the one about Frank Coe, Alger Hiss and Stevenson.)

(2) If Ike should win, he'll be heavily indebted to McCarthy.

Hoover: Observers here agree that by far the best speech of the campaign on either side was that delivered by former President Herbert Hoover on October 19. Demands for extra copies — running into six figures — have campaign headquarters swamped. We offer some gems from this extraordinary address:

"Our critics are correct that most Republicans opposed our joining with Stalin in the Second World War. We believed these monsters, Stalin and Hitler, should exhaust each other. We said repeatedly that by joining with Stalin in the war we would spread Communism over the earth. If this was isolationism, I am proud of it."

"Big Business did not rejoice over the Sherman Act. Many of them have never become reconciled to it. They induced the New Dealers in 1933 to, in effect, repeal the Anti-Trust laws by an imitation of Mussolini's Corporate State through creating the NRA. Only the Supreme Court saved our competitive economy from Fascism. A Democratic President denounced this action of the Court as 'reactionary'."

On corruption, Hoover said: "There were nine men involved in the Harding episode. The other members of the Administration were aghast. They determined to pursue these men implacably. Before we had finished with them, two of them had committed suicide, one died while awaiting trial, four landed in prison, and one escaped by a twice-hung jury. Can the perpetrators of the present mess in Washington point to any such vigorous house-cleaning?"

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Witness for Hiss: Reinforcing the point made early in the campaign in HUMAN EVENTS (August 13), sixteen lawyers in New York have issued a statement (October 23) criticizing Stevenson's aid to Alger Hiss, when the Illinois Governor gave a favorable deposition for the Hiss trial. These 16 lawyers, headed by Bruce Bromley, former judge on the New York Court of Appeals, emphasized the point early made by HUMAN EVENTS that Stevenson did not have to give the deposition. "Governor Stevenson", said the group, "was not under subpoena, or otherwise required to testify."

Thus the 16 lawyers nailed the false impression spread by Stevenson's propagandists — that the Governor was required by court order to give the deposition. "It is to be borne in mind", said the group of lawyers, "that he was an entirely voluntary witness for Hiss." As a lawyer, they declared, Governor Stevenson "should have been aware that his testimony, as a voluntary witness, in behalf of Hiss, might have been construed by the jury as implying a belief in Hiss' innocence by the Governor of Illinois".

"It is our opinion that, under the circumstances presented, he in any event displayed bad judgment in not insisting that Hiss subpoena him if he desired his testimony. Had that course been followed, the United States could have brought out on cross-examination that the Governor was testifying under subpoena, thus destroying or weakening any implication that a man occupying the Governor's important position was 'for Hiss'."

Traveller's Tales: A well-informed and experienced observer has just returned from a survey of Western European countries, and was good enough to tell us "all about it". His impressions, as he related them to us, give a series of pictures, so sharply different from those presented by the ineffable *New York Times* that we jotted them down, as follows:

Paris. Hideously expensive and the atmosphere anti-American. Premier Pinay virtually slapped our diplomatic face several weeks ago, obviously just to curry favor with voters. Almost all parties are against the American-sponsored European Army plan. All the talk is that the French Parliament will refuse to ratify this scheme to put Germans into a Western Army.

The gossip is that General Ridgway is pessimistic over European rearmament, feels that if the Russians should move west with their armies, all the 750,000 Americans in Western Europe would be lost, that not even a Dunkirk could be managed.

Germany. There's a chance that while France may turn down the European Army, the West German Parliament will ratify it. The death of Schumacher, Socialist leader and strong opponent of rearming, has lessened the opposition to Chancellor Adenauer.

Stories in the cabled dispatches from Germany about Adenauer having a lot of Nazis on his staffs are incorrect. There are some (necessarily because such help is in short supply); but just because former diplomats once worked for the Hitler regime is no sign that they were actually members of the Nazi party.

Most of the American journalists in Germany don't tell the whole story of what's going on; they just take handouts from the left-wingers in the American occupation regime.

Business is booming in West Germany and everyone is working hard — a 60 hour week.

England. One egg a week, a little strip of meat per week — dreary fare indeed. Little building. Blitz ruins which I saw in London 3 years ago are still there, untouched. In this country, a visitor feels depressed as when one visits the home of a dear friend, dying of cancer.

Spain. A colossal building boom in Madrid — new apartments, hotels, a new skyscraper, etc. Prices are cheap for visitors, lots of tourist business. Estimated 60,000 American tourists in the past year. The economic situation far better than two years ago, due partly to the end of the famous drought and good crops. There's even talk of an oil strike in Northern Spain — which, if true, would mean much for Spain's economy.

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Isaiah and the Remnant: Even in the time of the prophet Isaiah the individualist was in the minority. And even as Isaiah became discouraged because the masses would not listen to him, so does the individualist of this day frequently feel an urge to give up the fight for freedom and retire into obscurity. But, as the Lord told Isaiah, in every age, in every society, there is an unorganized and intelligent Remnant, an intellectual elite, whose capacity for understanding needs stimulation and encouragement; and it is to these that the prophet of individualism must direct his efforts. It is this Remnant who, when things go to pot, rebuild society and set it on its way again.

The story of Isaiah and the Remnant was set down in a brilliant essay entitled, "Isaiah's Job", by the late Albert Jay Nock, author of *Our Enemy the State.* The Foundation for Economic Education (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.) offers for the asking a free copy of an abstract of this essay. Every lover of freedom should send for it.

In the Magazines: *The Freeman* publishes in its current issue (November 3) "God and Woman at Vassar", by Nancy Jane Fellers. It is the personal experience story of a girl who fought the collectivist scourge in one of our major colleges. Miss Fellers is the daughter of General and Mrs. Bonner Fellers. Readers of HUMAN EVENTS will recall the many articles on military policy we have run by General Fellers.

—— The current *American Mercury* (October) contains a piece exposing Senator Harley Kilgore's pink connections. The article caused that legislator, now up for re-election, to sue a West Virginia newspaper which reprinted it. The *Mercury* (now under new ownership) promises to feature soon articles on the state of education in the country — certainly an indication of the prevailing interest in this great controversy.

—— Our contributor to this week's issue of HUMAN EVENTS, Professor E. Merrill Root, has written a piece for the *American Legion Monthly,* entitled "The Line Forms to the Left". It is expected that the Legion magazine will run the article in an early issue.

Book Front: Our survey of the book front in New York last week produced the following:

From Major Jordan's Diaries (reviewed in this section by Burton Rascoe last week) started out by selling well, then suddenly sales "froze". Those who know the tricks of the trade in New York say the Red Network in the book marketing game cut down sales by the usual methods. "No, madame, we're out of that", etc. In one case a friend of the book, receiving such a disclaimer, walked over to the shelves and pulled down a copy of the book, to the attendent apologies of the clerk. "What can you do?" remarked our friend, "for instance —— —— (wife of a prominent convicted Commie) is a sales clerk in one of the biggest bookstores in New York?"

We also heard that *The Enemy Within,* by Father Jaegher and Irene Kuhn (Doubleday), an eyewitness account of the Red Communist workings in China, has received similar "treatment".

But not only exposés of Communism suffer. The fine volume of individualistic essays *One is A Crowd,* by our colleague Frank Chodorov, has not been vouchsafed even a short review by the *New York Times* Sunday Book Section. Yet we have noticed a number of reviews of Fair Dealish books during the period since *One is a Crowd* appeared.

Mr. Devin Garrity, President of Devin-Adair Company, publishers of the Chodorov work, says the *Times* book section has not run a review of any book on his list since he commenced to publish Joe McCarthy's books.

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